AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior revisions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1~20. (*Cancelled*)

21. (*Currently amended*) A search service system comprising:

at least one memory having program instructions and databases, the databases including:

a category classification database including at least one representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups, each of the predetermined keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords;

a keyword database including at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords, each of the representative keywords representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

means for receiving a selection of a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group from a manager;

means for associating a representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group associated with a

second representative category to reflect current societal interest, ~~independent of statistical data~~ ~~of previous searches~~;

means for receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

means for searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a keyword group including the search keyword, the means for searching the category classification database determining at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category;

means for searching the keyword database for a keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group;

means for providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group; and

means for updating the data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword in response to the search request from the user.

22. (*Previously presented*) The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

23. (*Previously presented*) The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

24. (*Previously presented*) The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

25-29. (*Canceled*)

30. (*Currently amended*) A search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, each of the predetermined keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category to reflect current societal interest, ~~independent of statistical data of previous searches~~;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords, in a keyword database, each of the representative keywords representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a keyword group including the search keyword;

searching the keyword database for a keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group;

providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword in response to the search request from the user.

31. (*Previously presented*) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

32. (*Previously presented*) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

33. (*Previously presented*) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

34. (*Canceled*)

35. (*Currently amended*)   One or more storage media having stored thereon a computer program

that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform

acts including:

maintaining at least one representative category associated with one or more

predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, each of the predetermined

keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated

with the respective representative keywords;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a representative keyword

included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second

keyword group associated with a second representative category to reflect current societal

interest, independent of statistical data of previous searches;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of

searches made using one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with the

respective representative keywords, in a keyword database, each of the representative keywords

representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative keyword, which

convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search

request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated

with a keyword group including the search keyword;

searching the keyword database for a keyword group associated with the searched

representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more

representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative

keywords included in the searched keyword group;

providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to the search

request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made

using the respective representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective

representative keywords included in the searched keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using a representative

keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with the

representative keyword in response to the search request from the user.

36. (*Previously presented*)   The one or more storage media of claim 35, wherein the information

showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword

group associated with the searched representative category.

37. (*Previously presented*)   The one or more storage media of claim 35, wherein the information

showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group

associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one

keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

38. (*Canceled*)